



**LAURA M. TOY**  
6TH DISTRICT  
P.O. BOX 30036  
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909-7536  
PHONE: (517) 373-1707  
FAX: (517) 373-3935  
senltoy@senate.michigan.gov

**THE SENATE  
STATE OF MICHIGAN  
ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP**

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**Dear Editor:**

This Memorial Day, I would like to encourage all of my fellow citizens to pause in the spirit of remembrance and reverence to pay tribute to the more than one million American service members who sacrificed their lives in the defense of this great nation. They exemplified the very best of America, they embodied and fought for our collective national dream, and while words can scarcely express our indebtedness to them and to their families, we must never forget the ultimate price they paid for our freedom, and for the freedom of people around the world.

Their hearts and minds torn between resolve and fear, between pride and grief, between deep love of country and the necessity of war, these heroes of wars and conflicts always rose to the formidable and daunting challenge of defending the cherished ideals upon which this country was founded. To them, we are forever indebted for the liberty, peace, and security we enjoy, and too often take for granted. Today and every day we not only admire their military might and skill, but also their strength of heart and power of compassion; we honor them for their spirit of humanity, as much as their spirit of daring and courage.

Memorial Day also provides a special opportunity to recall and honor the “heroes on the home front” – military families and friends who supported our service men and women, most often from afar, while waiting patiently and prayerfully for their safe return home. Of course, war often exacts a heavy price, and we must remember our duty to these brave military families who suffered devastating losses so that countless men, women, and children across generations and across the globe might enjoy the freedom, harmony, and dignity that every human being, regardless of race, ethnicity, or nationality deserves.

This year, I encourage everyone to remember our fallen military heroes in some meaningful, tangible way:

- Seek out veterans in your community, and thank them for their service; these men and women have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share, and the very least we owe them is our commitment to ensuring that their legacy endures long after they have left this earth.
- Encourage your children to call a grandparent or other family member who served; the stories they share may prove very meaningful for both generations.
- Buy a flag for your home and fly the red, white, and blue in the appropriate manner.
- Lay a wreath on the grave of a veteran; originally Memorial Day was known as Decoration Day because it was an occasion to honor this nation’s fallen Civil War soldiers by decorating their burial sites.
- Attend a civic or religious service to pay your respects for our veterans, and show the families who have survived them that they are not forgotten.

Margaret Mead once said, *“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”* In this spirit, I hope that we all follow in the impressive footsteps of the

great military generations who have come before us, and live their example of patriotism to country, courage in the face of adversity, and resolute willingness to defend and protect every citizen in these United States of America.

May God bless our veterans, and may God bless America.

**State Sen. Laura Toy**

**6<sup>th</sup> District**

**Chair of the Senate Committee on Senior Citizens and Veterans Affairs**